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[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: GOR officials and outside experts told us the Cuba-Russia relationship had not significantly changed since Raul Castro became President. There is no strong preference for Raul or Fidel.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The MFA's Cuba desk told us June 23, and outside experts subsequently confirmed, that Russia did not have a preference for working with either Raul or Fidel.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Vladimir Davydov, Director of the Latin American Institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences, said that Russia perceived a difference in the preferences of Raul and Fidel.

Russian Priorities: Cuba or Venezuela?

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Both MFA officials and outside experts declined to prioritize Russia's relations with Cuba and Venezuela. Russia has a longer history of relations with Cuba than with Venezuela.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) Leaders of Cuba and Venezuela have participated in high-profile visits with Russia officials, including President Medvedev. Palacio Valdés has visited Moscow more frequently than Raul.

[1](#)6. (S/NF) Russia's bilateral trade with Venezuela totals more than USD 700 million, while trade with Cuba totals about USD 280 million. Davydov said that Russia's trade with Cuba is more diversified than its trade with Venezuela.

Russian Military Operations in Cuba

[1](#)7. (S/NF) GOR officials told us there were no plans to establish military bases in Cuba. They added that the GOR was unlikely to deploy any large-scale military units to Cuba.

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relationship was economic.

Working with Cuban Officials

[1](#)8. (S/NF) When asked about their working relationship with their Cuban counterparts, GOR officials declined to comment. BEYRLE